



*A Union of Professionals*  
**AFT-Maryland**

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**Written Testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee  
SB 764 – Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals  
April 1, 2026**

**FAVORABLE**

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and Members of the Committee: AFT Maryland strongly supports SB 764, an important step to help ensure economic dignity for the thousands of Education Support Professionals (ESPs) who serve as the backbone of our public schools.

This legislation recognizes that the paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers, and food service workers who keep our schools safe and operational deserve a wage that reflects their essential contributions to our communities.

Currently, nearly 60% of Maryland's ESPs earn less than a living wage. This financial instability forces many dedicated professionals to work multiple jobs just to afford basic necessities like housing and healthcare. These inadequate wages directly fuel the high turnover rates and chronic vacancies, which currently number in the thousands statewide, and disrupt the continuity of care and instruction our students rely on to succeed.

We cannot truly transform our education system through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future if we leave behind the very professionals who support our students and maintain our schools' infrastructure. By adopting SB 764, Maryland sends a clear message that every member of the school team is valued and essential. We respectfully urge a favorable report. Thank you.

